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MANON LESCAUT

LYRIC DRAMA IN FOUR ACTS

MUSIC BY

GIACOMO PUCCINI

GUSTAV HINRICHS

Presented for the first time in America at the Grand Opera House, Philadelphia, by the Hinrichs Grand Opera Company, August 29th, 1894.

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MANON LESCAUT	*Soprano*
LESCAUT, Sergeant of the Royal Guards	*Baritone*
CHEVALIER RENATO DES GRIEUX, Student	*Tenor*
GERONTE DI RAVOIR, Chief Treasurer	*Bass*
EDMONDO, Student	*Tenor*
THE INNKEEPER	*Bass*
THE DANCING MASTER	*Tenor*
A MUSICIAN	*Mezzo Soprano*
SERGEANT OF THE GUARDS	*Bass*
A LAMPLIGHTER	*Tenor*
COMMANDER OF MARINES	*Bass*
A HAIRDRESSER	*Pantomimist*

Maidens, Citizens, Abbots, Students, Musicians, Soldiers, Sailors.

Time of Action, Last Half of the 18th Century.

The adventures of Chevalier des Grieux, in Abbot Prévost's admirable book, "MANON LESCAUT," are so strange and yet so true to life that for stage production they had to be confined within severe limits. But the principal incidents and the persons, which constitute the true plot, have been faithfully retained, as follows:

"The Meeting at Amiens of Manon, destined to enter a Convent; and Des Grieux, intended for an ecclesiastical life—the love arising from that meeting—the thought of an elopement—the elopement—then the perfidy of Manon—the desertion of Des Grieux—the conquest of the old libertine De G*** M*** (in the libretto Geronte di Ravoir, Chief Treasurer)—the advices and intrigues of Lescaut, the sergeant Brother—and finally the return of love—the second elopement—the unsuccessful attempt—the arrest—the sentence to exile of Manon.

"Manon, capricious contrast of love, coquetry, avarice, seduction; the brother Lescaut, who hopes to find in his sister all the shameful qualities required for his depravement; the old and rich libertine, the origin of Manon's ruin; the Chevalier Des Grieux, whose ardent love leads him to hope forever, and who, as the last illusion vanishes, relinquishes everything and serves as a menial on the same vessel which is to bring Manon to her exile in America; thus following his love and his fate. Inexorable fate persecutes him. Manon and Des Grieux, compelled to an immediate flight a third time which results in one of the most sublime and piteous pages in the drama. There, in a deserted, wild and barren country, in a profound solitude, in an immense abandonment of everything, even life—"

All this has been retained in this libretto adhering as closely to accuracy as is possible in translation for opera of this narrative.

MANON LESCAUT

ACT I.

IN AMIENS

A large square near the gate of Paris. A path to the right. On the left an inn with a portico, under which are placed several tables. An exterior stairway leads to the first story of the inn.

STUDENTS, PEASANTS, CITIZENS, WOMEN, SOLDIERS WALKING ON THE SQUARE AND THE AVENUE. SOME ARE CHATTING, OTHERS SEATED AT TABLES, DRINKING AND GAMBLING.

EDMONDO, surrounded by students, then DES GRIEUX

EDMONDO

(Comic and sentimental.)

Hail gentle night, descending with thy court of zephyrs and stars. Hail, thou who art dear to poets and to lovers.

STUDENTS

(Interrupting him with laughter.)

And to thieves and to drunkards. Have we not dashed to pieces your Madrigal?

EDMONDO

And I thank you. Along the avenue come groups of working girls, jolly, fresh and beautiful.

STUDENTS

Now the avenue becomes lively.

EDMONDO

I am preparing a Madrigal, cutting, bright and gay, and be all gallantry my muse!

EDMONDO and STUDENTS

(To some approaching girls.)

Youth is our name. Hope is our Goddess, indomitable virtue is emblazoned on our banners. Blessed passion! Now you bright loving creatures, give your lips and your hearts to gallant youth.

MAIDENS

(Approaching.)

There lingers in the air, a wave of perfume. Swallows are flying, and the sun is dying. This is the hour of imagination, struggling twixt hope and melancholy.

(Enter Des Grieux in student's dress.)

STUDENTS

Ah, Des Grieux!

(Des Grieux salutes without stopping.)

EDMONDO

(Calling him.)

Join us friend, come and laugh, and discard the solicitude of your strange adventure.

(Des Grieux, is little disposed to join the gay company.)

You do not answer? Why? You seem sad! Perhaps, unrequited love has stricken you?

DES GRIEUX

(Interrupts him, shrugging his shoulders.)

Love! Be thou tragedy or comedy, I know not!

(The Students disperse; some stay to converse with Des Grieux and Edmondo, others are flirting with the girls, who pass arm in arm on the square and avenue.)

SOME STUDENTS

(To Des Grieux.)

You're jesting! Some mysterious conquest has put you in a happy mood;

trust to the Son of Venus, he will guide and bless you.

DES GRIEUX

Friends, you do me too much honor.

EDMONDO and STUDENTS

Good! We guess right friend—you're displeased at our discovery.

DES GRIEUX

No—not yet; but if it pleases you I'll oblige you—and quickly! (*He approaches some girls, who are passing, and says with gallantry.*) Is there amongst you, beautiful brunettes and blondes, a bashful maiden, bright and charming, with rosy lips, who is waiting for me? Is it you—blonde star? Tell me! Reveal my destiny, and guide me to the divine, ardent face which inspires me with love, so that I may see and adore it eternally. Is it you graceful brunette? Tell me!

(These girls, surmising that he is jesting, retire angrily shrugging the shoulders. The students laugh.)

STUDENTS

Bravo!

EDMONDO

See, companions, of him none must longer complain.

ALL

Let us feast this evening, as is our custom, and in revelry let our glasses resound with music, and let us be enraptured and fascinated by this ardent pleasure.

Dancing, toasting, frolicking. Thus the court of voluptuousness, approaching, will reign supreme this night.

It is bright and impetuous. It's a poem of brightness that wins all. It intoxicates all with its light and its fury.

(The sound of a postillion's horn is heard. From the right a coach approaches; all gather to see who arrives. The coach stops at the gate of the inn. From it alights Lescaut; then Geronte, who gallantly helps Manon to descend. Some porters come from the inn, who make themselves useful to the travelers.)

Here is the coach of Arras! Let us see the elegant and gallant travelers as they alight.

MANON, LESCAUT, GERONTE, THEN THE INNKEEPER; SEVERAL PORTERS OF THE INN.

STUDENTS

(Admiring Manon.)

Who would not give to that charming lady a kindly greeting of welcome?

LESCAUT

Ho! Landlord! (*To Geronte.*) Chevalier, you are a model of gallantry. (*Calling*) Ho! Landlord!

INNKEEPER

(Hastening.)

Here I am!

DES GRIEUX

(Looking at Manon.)

Heavens! How beautiful she is!

(The coach enters the portals of the inn; the crowd disperses; some students return to the tables to drink and gamble; Edmondo steps aside to observe Manon and Des Grieux.)

GERONTE

(To the innkeeper.)

To-night I shall rest here. (*To Lescaut*) Excuse me; (*to the innkeeper*) take charge of my baggage.

THE INNKEEPER

As you desire (*gives some orders*) pray follow me

(Geronte and Lescaut preceded by the innkeeper ascend to the first story. Lescaut makes a sign to Manon to wait for him. Manon takes seat.)

DES GRIEUX,

(Who never has taken his eyes from Manon, approaches her.)

If you are as good as you are beautiful, tell me your name pretty maiden?

MANON

(Rising, answers modestly.)

Manon Lescaut is my name.

DES GRIEUX

Pardon me, but a strange fascination draws me toward you. It seems to me I have seen your face ere this. A strange emotion fills my heart. When do you depart?

MANON

(Sorrowful.)

To-morrow at dawn I depart. A convent awaits me.

DES GRIEUX

You, who have just entered the springtime of life! O, gentle maiden, what fate hovers over you?

(Edmondo slily approaches the students, who are at the inn, and roguishly calls their attention to Des Grieux who is in close conversation with Manon.)

MANON

My fate is my father's will.

DES GRIEUX

Oh! How beautiful you are! Ah! No, your destiny is not a barren convent. A brighter star shall illumine your future.

MANON

My star is setting.

DES GRIEUX

(Sadly.)

We cannot talk now. Return shortly and we will conspire against the fate, and we shall conquer.

MANON

Your words are so kind! I will remember you. Your name?

DES GRIEUX

I am Renato des Grieux.

LESCAUT

(From within.)

Manon!

MANON

(Immediately.)

I must leave you. (*Turning to the inn.*) I am coming! (*To Des Grieux.*) My brother has called me.

DES GRIEUX

(Entreating.)

Will you return?

MANON

No! I cannot. Leave me!

DES GRIEUX

Oh, gentle maid, I entreat you.

MANON

(With emotion.)

You have conquered. When darkness surrounds us—

(She suddenly interrupts herself as she sees Lescaut, who appears on the balcony of the inn. She hastily joins him and both enter the room.)

DES GRIEUX

(Who has followed Manon with his glances breaks forth passionately.)

Never have I seen a woman like this! To tell her "I love you" would be ecstatic bliss.—"Manon Lescaut is my name."—How these words haunt my spirit and arouse my senses! Oh delightful sensation do not cease.

(Edmondo and the students, who have watched Des Grieux, surround him.)

STUDENTS

Your adventure assures us, oh worthy son of Cupid, that the beautiful and divine pilgrim descended from heaven for your delight. (*Des Grieux leaves piqued*) He goes; then he is in love.

(All the students merrily approach the inn. They fall in with some maidens and invite them to follow them. Meanwhile Lescaut and Geronte in deep conversation descend the stairs. Edmondo talks to one of the girls; at the end of the conversation between Lescaut and Geronte he accompanies her to the walk on the right and leaves her.)

STUDENTS

Come maidens! You bring us good luck.

MAIDENS

Is she blonde or brunette—the goddess that causes your dispute?

STUDENTS

The beautiful tresses of our goddess are not to be described. Whether we lose or win, whether we laugh or cry, we are happy in the love of pretty maidens. Ill luck may overcome us with derision, but the frivolous songs of love revive us.

MAIDENS

Jolly friends which shall it be, the smile, the kiss, the sigh? Let us celebrate the victory, and let the heart of the

conquered forget anguish in the repose of the sweet exhalation of soft caresses.

(Students and maidens place themselves at the tables; some commence to gamble, others order drinks.)

EDMONDO

(To a girl.)

Farewell, my star! Farewell, my flower! Bright sister of the God of love, for thee I sigh. For a day betray me not.

(He salutes her gallantly; the girl leaves; then seeing Geronte and Lescaut in close conversation, he steps aside to observe them.)

GERONTE

(To Lescaut.)

So your sister will take the veil?

LESCAUT

Bad advice of our family.

GERONTE

It seems then, that your ideas differ?

LESCAUT

Most certainly. I am not in accord with the plans. Gloom surrounds my youthful progeny. I know life; perhaps too much. Paris is a great school. As my sister's guide I fulfill, though reluctantly, my duty as a true soldier. Ungrateful services in this world fall upon us without compensation; and you, illustrious signor?

GERONTE

Geronte di Ravoir.

LESCAUT

You travel for pleasure?

GERONTE

No, duty; the collection of rents intrusted to me by the graciousness of the King and by my purse.

LESCAUT

(What a bag of gold.)

GERONTE

And your sister does not seem overjoyed.

LESCAUT

Fancy at the age of eighteen! What dreams and hopes in that little head.

GERONTE

I understand! Poor girl! She needs to be consoled. This evening you come and sup with me. The hour will be favorable.

LESCAUT

What an honor! Meanwhile permit me—

(Makes a sign as if to offer him something at the inn.)

GERONTE

(Who first has followed Lescaut as if to accept, changes his mind suddenly.)

Excuse me—wait a few moments for me—I must give some orders to the innkeeper.

(Lescaut bows to Geronte who walks towards the back. It is getting dark. Several lamps and candles are brought from the inn and put on the gambling tables.)

STUDENTS

(Playing with animation.)

An ace; a jack; a tray; what a cursed game!

LESCAUT

(Attracted by the voices approaches the portico and looks on with feverish interest.)

Playing! Oh if I were sure of luck I also would tempt fate.

STUDENTS

Shuffle! Shuffle!—Cards! An ace!

LESCAUT

(Approaches the students, he places himself at the back of a player, observes his game, then with a reproachful air.)

An ace? Why, gentlemen, a jack! An error, an error!

STUDENTS

(To Lescaut.)

It is true, a jack; you are a master?

LESCAUT

You are joking! I'm an apprentice—

STUDENTS

Sit down—we invite you.

LESCAUT

(Cool and contemptuously takes seat.)

Cards!

(Geronte who has observed Lescaut from a distance, and seeing him occupied at the game, calls the innkeeper, who is on the threshold of the gate: the innkeeper hastens to him; Geronte conducts him aside while Edmondo, suspecting the movements of Geronte, cautiously approaches to watch him.)

GERONTE

(To the innkeeper.)

My friend, I pay first and deal in few words! A carriage and horses that go like the wind, in one hour!

THE INNKEEPER

Good, sir.

GERONTE

Behind the inn, in an hour, you understand? A man and a maiden will come —and away like the wind towards Paris! And remember silence is gold.

THE INNKEEPER

Gold I adore.

GERONTE

'Tis well! (*giving him a purse.*) Adore it and obey. But tell me (*pointing toward the gate of the inn*) is this the only egress from the inn?

THE INNKEEPER

There is another.

GERONTE

Show me the way.

(They leave by the rear, to the left.)

EDMONDO

(Who has overheard the conversation between Geronte and the Innkeeper.)

Amiable old man—a powdered Pluto you are! Perhaps your Proserpine will have the virtue to resist you.

(Enter Des Grieux pensive. Edmondo approaches him and slapping him on the shoulder says)

Chevalier, they deceive you.

DES GRIEUX

(Surprised.)

What do you mean?

EDMONDO

(Ironically.)

That sweet flower, so fragrant a little while ago, uprooted from its stem, poor flower, will wither in an hour! Your maiden, your dove now flies. The postillion's horn is sounding. Go console yourself. An old man abducts her.

DES GRIEUX

(Greatly disturbed.)

Indeed?

EDMONDO

You grow pale. By heavens, the thing is serious.

DES GRIEUX

I am awaiting her here. Do you understand?

EDMONDO

This is flourishing.

DES GRIEUX

Save me.

EDMONDO

Save you? Prevent the departure? We'll try it—listen. Perhaps I will save you. The soldier bit at the bait of gaming

DES GRIEUX

And the old man?

EDMONDO

The old man? Why, he will have to deal with me!

(He approaches his companions who are playing and whispers to some of them, then exits to the left. Play is suspended; Lescaut drinks with the Students; Manon appears on the stairs anxiously looking around and seeing Des Grieux, descends and approaches him.)

MANON

You see? I am true to my word. You asked, with fervent prayer, that I should come to you again. 'Twould have been better, I think, not to have seen you again, and to insist upon my refusal to grant your prayer

DES GRIEUX

Oh how grave your words are. Your gentle age and your sweet face do not reason thus. Smiles do not correspond with your beautiful sad eyes, which reflect severe reasoning and disdain.

MANON

Yet merry and gay I once was. The quiet home resounded with my joyous laughter, and with my merry friends I

gaily joined the dance. But the time of merriment is past.

DES GRIEUX

(Fascinated)

In those bright, dreamy eyes sparkles the desire to love. Love speaks to you now. Recompense this new enchantment with the blissful union of our lips and hearts. Give up your soul to this glorious invitation of kisses and caresses surrounding you. I love you! I love you! Ah, make this moment eternal and infinite!

MANON

I am but a poor maiden My face has no beauty, and sadness rules my destiny.

DES GRIEUX

Sadness will be conquered by love. Beauty gives you a brilliant future. Oh, sweet maiden, my infinite soul. Sweet delight surrounds me, oh, flower of my soul. Sweet joy surrounds me, oh, dream of my soul. Wherever your glances permeate me life begins for me. I dream of a future of radiant life together with you.

MANON

This cannot be true. The dream is too beautiful. Oh! are your words not deceit?

LESCAUT

(Rising half tipsy, striking the table)

Is there no more wine? Eh! Is the cask empty?

(The Students force him to sit down and pour him more wine; Manon and Des Grieux, on hearing Lescaut's voice, retire quickly to the right. Manon frightened would re-enter the inn but is kept back by Des Grieux.)

DES GRIEUX

Prithee, hear me. A vile outrage threatens you—an abduction. A libertine, that old man who arrived with you, has laid a trap for your ruin.

MANON

(Surprised.)

What say you?

DES GRIEUX

The truth!

EDMONDO

(Running, approaches Des Grieux and Manon and says quickly.)

The deed is done, the carriage is ready—what a colossal trick. Quick. Go!

MANON

(Surprised.)

To fly? To fly?

DES GRIEUX

Let us fly. Sanction that your abductor be another.

MANON

(To Des Grieux.)

You abduct me?

DES GRIEUX

Love abducts you.

MANON

(Resisting.)

No, no!

DES GRIEUX

(Imploring fervidly.)

I implore you.

EDMONDO

Quick. Go my children.

DES GRIEUX

(Insisting.)

Manon! Manon!

MANON

(Resolved.)

Let us go.

EDMONDO

Ah what pretty fools.

(Edmondo gives Des Grieux his cloak with which he covers his face and all three quickly fly behind the inn. Immediately after, Geronte enters from the left, goes directly to the table where Lescaut is drinking, slaps him friendly on the shoulder, and says)

GERONTE

My sergeant; what of that supper?

LESCAUT

(Rising heavily.)

Yes, sir, to supper. To supper.

GERONTE

(To himself.)

Good for me. Our friend is tipsy. (*Tinkling of bells in the distance.*) A departure, and at this hour? 'Tis strange.

(Meanwhile Lescaut goes reeling from the portal to the staircase; the Students advance laughing; Geronte surprised at their behaviour, and growing suspicious, makes some steps towards the rear, while Edmondo enters, also laughing, and approaches his companions who are gathered on the right of the stage.)

EDMONDO

(To his companions.)

Stupendous scene. He has left.

LESCAUT

(On the stairs, calling.)

Manon! Manon!

EDMONDO and CHORUS

She is not here.

GERONTE

(Returning raging.)

My carriage! Infamy! Treason!

LESCAUT

(Disturbed by the noise, descends.)

What is the matter?

GERONTE

Your sister has been abducted.

LESCAUT

(Drawing his sword.)

By heavens! I demand the traitor's blood!

SOME WOMEN

Ha, ha! This is the night for drunkards and fools.

GERONTE

(In the height of rage.)

Let me pass!

LESCAUT

(To Geronte.)

I will find her. I swear it, sir. (*To the Students.*) I shall make you tremble.

(They start; the crowd increases; other students enter, also the Innkeeper, Waiters, Women; the crowd bars the exit of Lescaut and Geronte.)

INNKEEPER, WAITERS, WOMEN, PEASANTS

What is the matter? What an uproar! What strange noise! The quiet city is all upset.

SOME

(Asking.)

What has happened?

OTHERS

(Advancing.)

Well?

WOMEN

What a noise!

OLD PEOPLE

What has happened?

STUDENTS

(Laughing.)

'Tis the old man.

OTHER STUDENTS

(Also laughing.)

'Tis the soldier.

SOME

(Indignant.)

They are eager for the fray.

WOMEN

(Frightened.)

They fight!

OTHERS

(Still inquiring.)

And why?

PEASANTS

(Commenting.)

They were so happy a while ago.

WOMEN

The old man is furious.

STUDENTS

(Laughing.)

He threatens.

OLD PEOPLE

(Stupified.)

What a noise!

STUDENTS

(Towards Lescaut.)

The soldier is already drunk.

WOMEN

(Screaming.)

He has drawn his sword.

SOME
(Trying to make peace.)
Be calm, gentlemen!

OTHERS
(Interfering with threats.)
Ho, there!

OLD PEOPLE
(Aside.)
Every one is already furious.

WOMEN
(Comically.)
And nobody knows why.

STUDENTS
(Surrounding Geronte.)
The old man is beside himself.

PEASANTS
(Advancing)
What confusion is this?

MEN
It makes us giddy.

PEASANTS
Away!

MAID SERVANTS
Enough!

STUDENTS
(Laughing.)
Truce!

OLD MEN
Peace!

WOMEN
No one listens! No one stops!

GERONTE and LESCAUT
Silence! Restrain yourself. Suppress your laughter. Your folly shall be cast aside.

LESCAUT
My head is turning. The earth is reeling. (*To Geronte.*) I shall find her —trust me. (*To himself.*) What an infernal round. The ground seems to sink. (*To Geronte.*) I shall find her. (*To the crowd, trying to impose, but reeling.*) I'm a guard of the King!

EDMONDO and STUDENTS
(To Lescaut)
Steady, soldier. (*To Geronte*) Love has frustrated your evil designs. To supper now go we. To supper—and let us drink. Though woman prove false, the glass is ever faithful.

(Surrounding Geronte and Lescaut they drag them towards the inn amidst general laughter.)

ACT II.

IN PARIS.

Elegant parlor in the house of Geronte. In the rear two doors. To the right rich and heavy portieres hide the alcove. To the left, near the window, a toilet table. A sofa, chairs, an arm chair, a table.

MANON—A HAIRDRESSER

MANON IS SEATED BEFORE THE TOILET TABLE; SHE IS COVERED WITH A LARGE WHITE DRESSING GOWN, WHICH ENVELOPS HER COMPLETELY. THE HAIRDRESSER IS BUSY ABOUT HER. TWO SERVANTS IN THE REAR ARE READY TO ASSIST THE HAIRDRESSER.

MANON
(Looking in the glass.)
What a stubborn little curl. (*To the hairdresser*) The curling iron—quick. (*The hairdresser runs to fetch the iron and curls her hair, then executes quickly the various orders of Manon.*) Now the brush. Darken the eyebrows. The powder. (*Contented.*) My appearance will please him. Hand me the daffodil.

LESCAUT AND THE PRECEDING.

LESCAUT
(Entering.)
Good morning, sister!

MANON
(Paying attention only to the hairdresser.)
The rouge and the pomade.

LESCAUT
You seem a little cross this morning.

MANON

Cross? Why?

LESCAUT

No? So much the better. (*Smiling maliciously.*) Where is Geronte? Why has he left the boudoir so early?

MANON

(To the hairdresser.)

And now a beauty patch.

(The hairdresser brings Manon a Japanese box containing the beauty patches. Manon, undecided, is searching and examining the different patches.)

LESCAUT

(Advising her.)

The impudent; the rascal; no, the gallant.

MANON

(Still undecided.)

I don't know. (*Determined.*) Well, two patches. On the eyes, the killer, and on the lips, the voluptuous.

(The hairdresser fixes the two patches; then gracefully takes the dressing gown from Manon, who appears dressed and powdered en graude toilette. He folds the dressing gown, bows to Manon, makes a sign to the servants and exits with many bows.)

LESCAUT

(Looks at Manon and exclaims admiringly.)

What a lovely sight.

LESCAUT, MANON, LATER MUSICIANS.

LESCAUT

(Continuing to admire Manon.)

You are splendid and bright. I take the credit unto myself. Mine is the glory if you were saved from the love of a student. When you fled, there at Amiens, hope never foresook my heart. —then I saw your fate. Then the magic splendor of these apartments flashed upon me. I found you again. A small cottage was your home. You possessed innumerable kisses and—no money. This Des Grieux is a good fellow; but, alas, he is not a cashier general. It was, therefore, but natural that some day Manon should abandon that humble dwelling for a gilded palace.

MANON

(Interrupting him.)

Well—tell me.

LESCAUT

What do you say?

MANON

Nothing.

LESCAUT

Nothing? Indeed?

MANON

(Indifferently.)

I wanted to ask—

LESCAUT

I shall reply.

MANON

(Turning quickly.)

You will reply?

LESCAUT

(Maliciously.)

I understand. In your eyes I read a desire. (*Looking comically around.*) If Geronte suspected it.

MANON

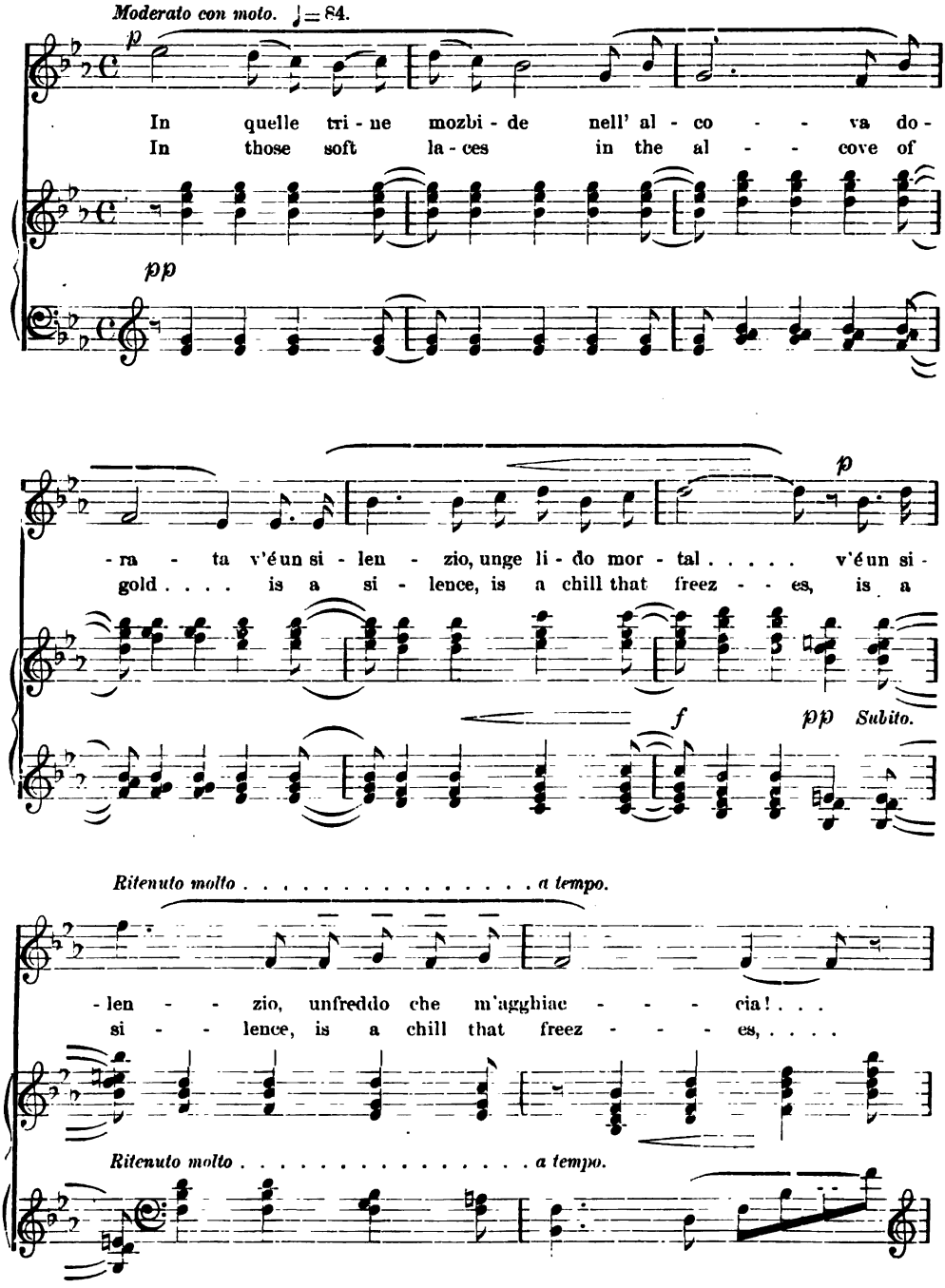
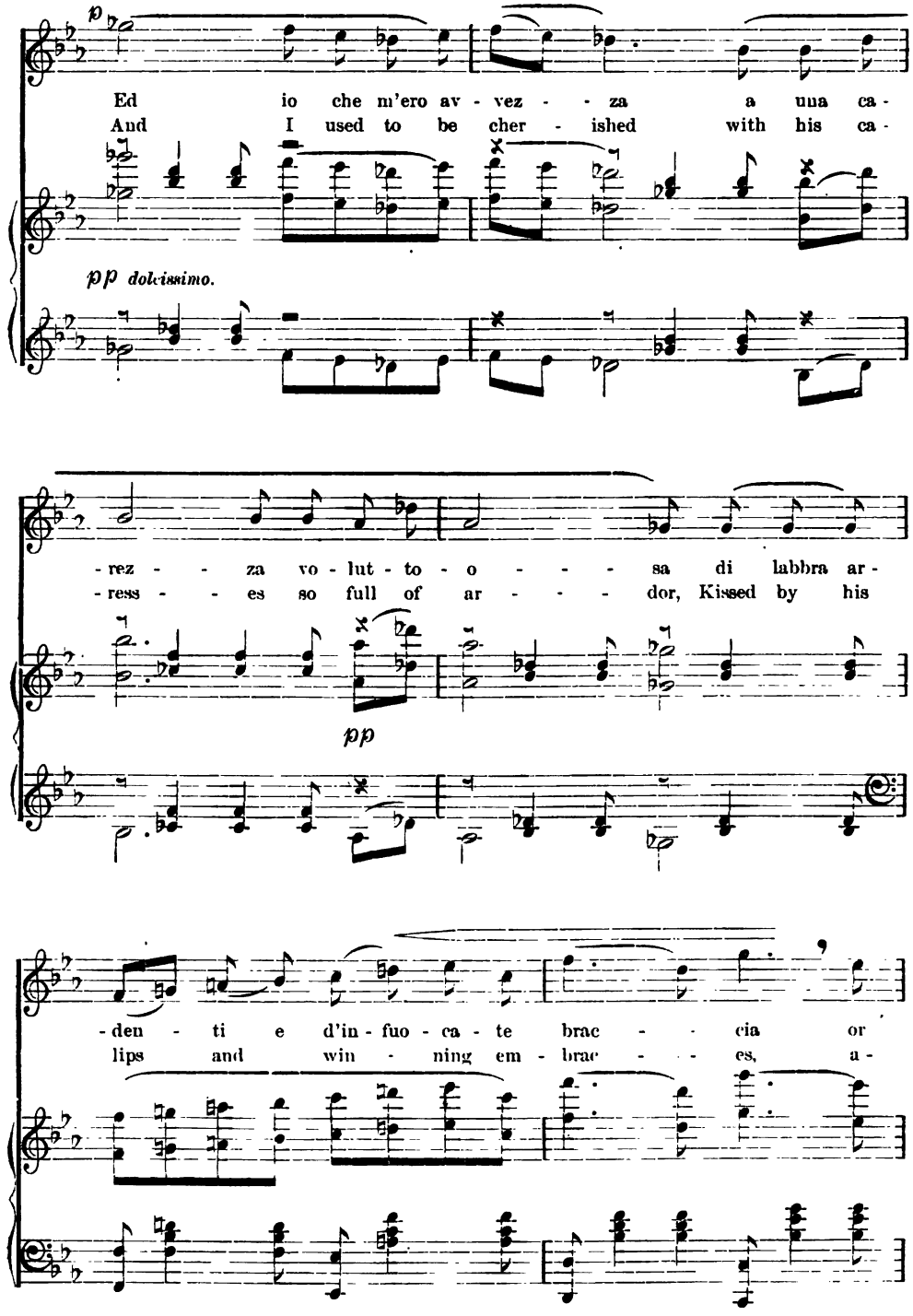
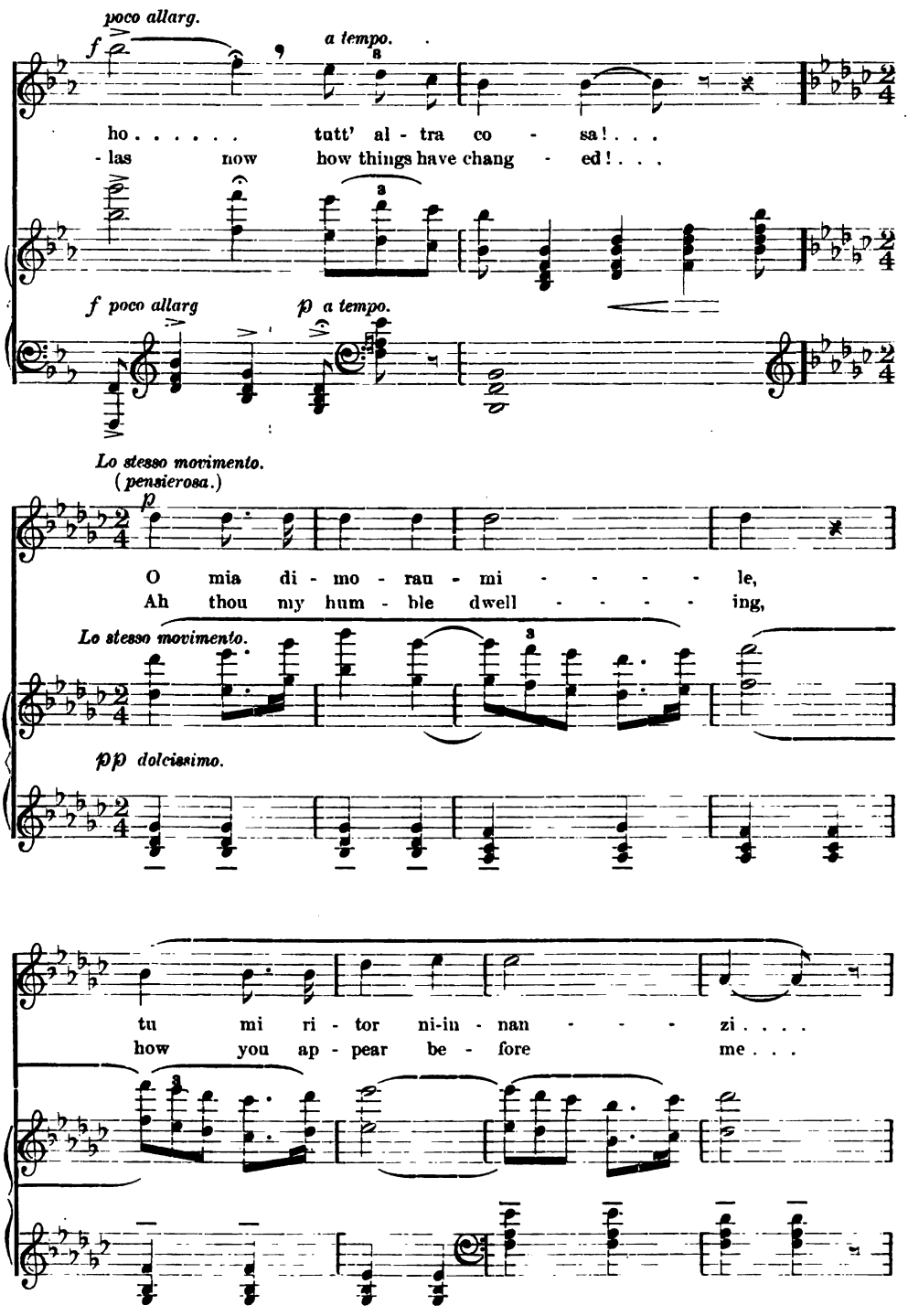
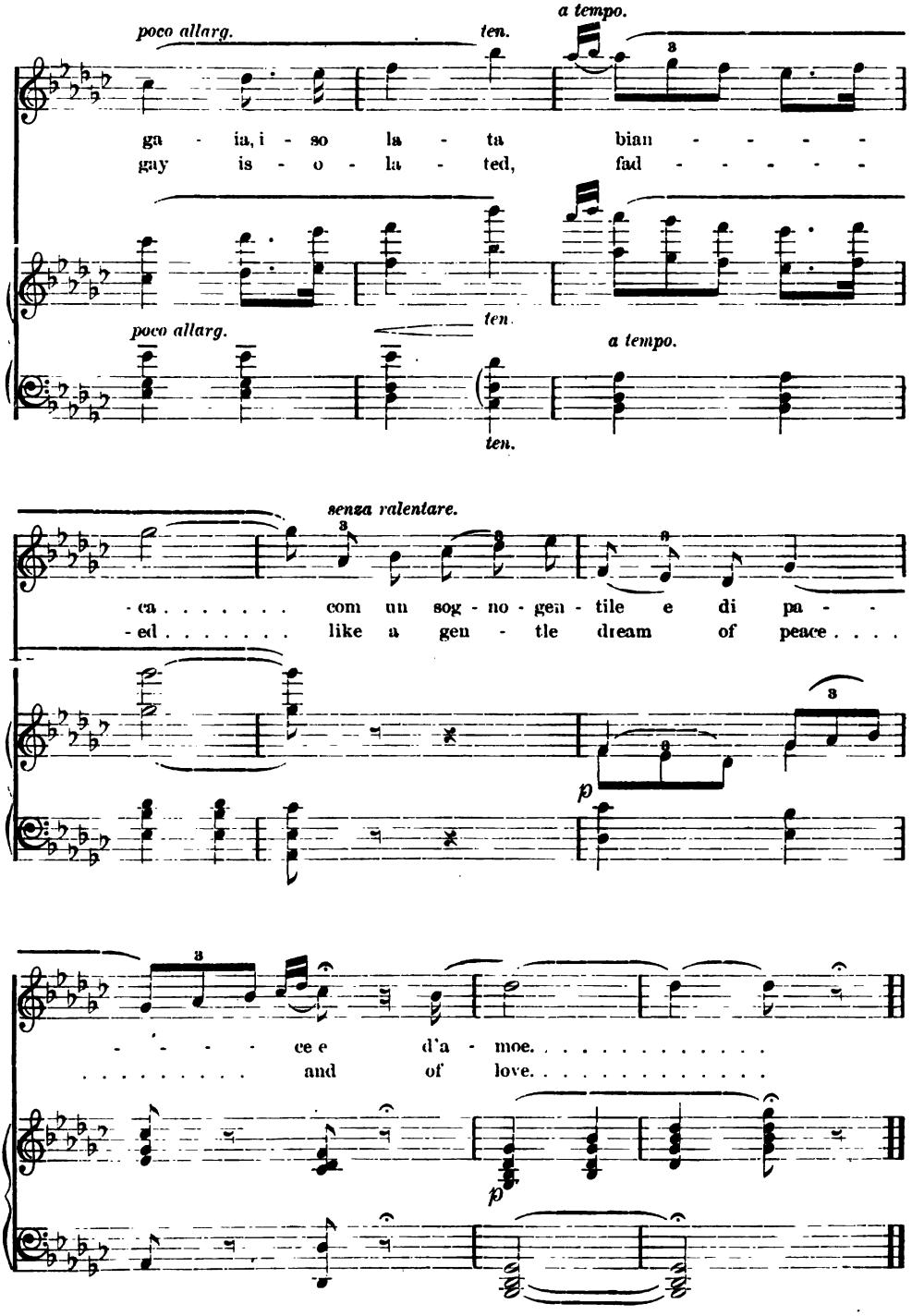
(Merrily.)

'Tis true. You guessed it.

LESCAUT

You wish to here news from—him?

MANON

It is true. (*Sadly.*) I forsook him without a farewell—a kiss. (*She looks around and rests her eyes on the alcove.*) Ah! In those soft laces—in that golden alcove is rest. A chill permeates me; and I used to be caressed, voluptuously kissed by ardent lips and warm embraces. Now how different. (*Thoughtful.*) Oh, my humble dwelling, you appear before me gay, isolated, fading, like a gentle dream of peace and love.

Moderato con moto. ♩= 84.
p
In quelle tri - ne mozbi - de nell' al - co - - va do -
In those soft la - ces in the al - - cove of
pp
- ra - ta v'é un si - len - zio, unge li - do mor - tal . . . . . v'é un si -
gold . . . . is a si - lence, is a chill that freez - - es, is a
p
f
pp Subito.
Ritenuto molto . . . . . a tempo.
- len - - zio, unfreddo che m'agghiac - - - cia! . . .
si - - lence, is a chill that freez - - - es, ...
Ritenuto molto . . . . . a tempo.

p
Ed io che m'ero av - vez - - za a una ca -
And I used to be cher - ished with his ca -
pp dolcissimo.
- rez - - za vo - lut - to - o - - - sa di labbra ar -
- ress - - es so full of ar - - - - dor, Kissed by his
pp
- den - ti e d'in - fuo - ca - te brac - - cia or
lips and win - ning em - brac - - es, a -

poco allarg.
a tempo.
ho . . . . . tutt' al - tra co - sa! . . .
- las now how things have chang - ed! . . .
f poco allarg
p a tempo.
Lo stesso movimento.
(pensierosa.)
O mia di - mo - rau - mi - - - - - le,
Ah thou my hum - ble dwell - - - - - ing,
Lo stesso movimento.
pp dolcissimo.
tu mi ri - tor ni-in - nan - - - - zi . . . .
how you ap - pear be - fore me . . .

poco allarg.
ten.
a tempo.
ga - ia, i - so la - ta bian - - - - -
gay is - o - la - ted, fad - - - - - -
poco allarg.
ten.
a tempo.
ten.
senza ralentare.
- ca . . . . . com un sog - no - gen - tile e di pa - -
- ed . . . . . like a gen - tle dream of peace . . . .
p
- - - - - ce e d'a - moe. . . . . .
. . . . . and of love. . . . . .
p

LESCAUT

(Obse:ving Manon restlessly.)

Well—as you want to know—Des Grieux, like Geronte, is one of my great friends, and always tortures me by his (*Imitating Des Grieux*): "Where is Manon? Where? With whom has she fled, and whither? To the East? To the North? To the South?" I always answer: "I know not." And finally I convinced him.

MANON

(Surprised.)

Then he has forgotten me?

LESCAUT

No. No. But if he wins, with gold he is sure to find the way which leads to you. (*Mysteriously and with the gestures of an expert gambler.*) Now his fortune he is trying. I have launched him in the game. He will win. 'Tis the old story for us, as well as for thousands of others. By me started and instructed he will pluck everything and everybody. But in the martyrdom of his long fighting, day and night he lives ignorant of his folly, and while playing he is asking where you are.

MANON

(To herself, sorrowfully.)

For me you are struggling, for me, vile one, that left you and caused you so much sorrow. Ah, come. Give me back the past, the fleeting hours—your ardent caresses, your burning kisses, the joy that made me happy once. Come. You thought me beautiful. More beautiful I will be.

(She remains pensive, sad; then her eyes rest on the mirror in which her admirable figure is reflected; her hands almost unconsciously arrange the folds of her dress, then her thoughts seem to change, her lips smile, the eyes brighten with the triumph of her beauty and passing before the mirror she asks Lescaut.)

Is it true that this dress fits me wonderfully?

LESCAUT

(Admiring her.)

It fits exquisitely.

MANON

And the wig?

LESCAUT

Prodigious.

MANON

And the bodice?

LESCAUT

Beautiful!

(Some persons in court dress enter carrying sheets of music. They advance bowing and place themselves before Manon.)

LESCAUT

(In a low voice to Manon.)

What strange beauties are these? Charlatans or specialists?

MANON

(Annoyed.)

They are musicians! Geronte composes Madrigals.

THE MADRIGAL

THE MUSICIANS

On the summit of the mountain
Roaming—Oh *Clori*
Your lips are two roses
Each eye is a fountain.
"Oh dear; Oh dear!"
Filen sighs at your feet!
Your tresses flying with the wind
Are bewitching.
As fair as a lily is
Thy perfect, white throat.

Clori you are, Manon,
And into *Filen*, Geronte has been changed.

Filen is now playing,
His fife is now murmuring
Pity. And echo sighs: "pity."

Filen weeps.
Has *Clori*, then, no heart?
Look—already—*Filen* is fainting.

(In a low voice)

To a fife that so gently weeps, *Clori*
Has never said "no!"

MANON

(Bored, gives a purse to Lescaut.)

Pay those fellows.

LESCAUT

(Putting the purse in his pocket.)

Fy! Offend art? (*To the musicians, stately.*) I dismiss you in the name of glory.

(The musicians leave, bowing.)

THE MINUET

MANON, LESCAUT, GERONTE, OLD GENTLEMEN, ABBOTS, THE DANCING MASTER, INSTRUMENTAL MUSICIANS.

(*While the vocal musicians leave through one door, from the other are seen coming into the ante-chamber some friends of Geronte, old gentlemen, elegant abbots. Geronte receives them. In the meantime some orchestral players enter and place themselves in the rear, to the left.*)

MANON

(Showing these people to Lescaut.)

The Madrigals. And the dancing. And then the music. They are all fine things. But (*she cannot repress a yawn, and yawning exclaims*) I am bored!

(She goes towards Geronte, who enters followed by the Dancing Master and others. All bow profusely.)

(Lescaut observes smilingly this insipid scene, the players tune their instruments while Geronte, with the Dancing Master, is organizing and preparing the Minuet.)

LESCAUT

(To himself, reflecting philosophically)

A pretty woman, who is bored, is dangerous. (*After a little reflection.*) I will go to Des Grieux. 'Twill be a master stroke to prepare him for coming events. (*Exit.*)

GENTLEMEN and ABBOTS

What languor in her looks!
How sweet,
How charming.
She is too beautiful!
Her smiles resemble stars.
What purity,
What treasure.
That mouth invites to kisses.
Its smiles resemble stars.

(While the Dancing Master receives Geronte's orders, other persons enter, bow before Manon, kiss her hand, offer her flowers, sweetmeats, &c. The Dancing Master comes forward, offers his hand to Manon in order to commence the Minuet. Geronte indicates to his friends to step aside and be seated. During the dance servants bring chocolate and refreshments.)

THE DANCING MASTER

(To Manon.)

I pray you, Signorina, raise your chest —then—ah, brava, that I like—my beauty, now forward—so! I pray you —in time!

GERONTE

(Enthusiastically.)

Oh, lovely dancer!

MANON

(With false modesty.)

A little inexperienced.

THE DANCING MASTER

(Impatiently.)

I pray you—do not mind the whispered praises—the dance is a serious matter.

GENTLEMEN and ABBOTS

(To Geronte.)

Silence. Restrain yourself like we do at home. Admire in silence, adore in silence. 'Tis a serious matter.

THE DANCING MASTER

(To Manon.)

To the left. Brava. To the right. A salute.
Attention! The Eye-glass!

GERONTE

Perfect Minuet!

(Manon is looking here and there at the group of her admirers. She is excited the old gentlemen and Abbots look eagerly at Manon.)

MANON

Golden praises, murmured, whispered, float around; pray restrain your chorus of flattery.

SOME GENTLEMEN and ABBOTS

You are the goddess of the day!

OTHERS

You are the queen of night!

GERONTE

She is too beautiful. When she rebels her words are song and praise. You convulse me with delirium.

(The Dancing Master shows signs of impatience.)

MANON

The good Master does not want words. If you compliment me I shall not become the divine dancer which you imagine me already to be.

THE MASTER

(Impatiently.)

A Chevalier.

GERONTE

(Hastening.)

Here I am.

GENTLEMEN and ABBOTS

Bravi! What a couple.

(Figure of Salute.)

(Geronte dances totally oblivious, he scarcely marks the steps, he is very happy.

GENTLEMEN and ABBOTS

Long live the happy lovers! Mercury and Venus! Oh, here joy with love and plenty graciously dwells.

MANON

(To the air of the Minuet. To Geronte.)

The hour, oh, *Thyrsus*, is bright and beautiful; the day smiles—and in return smiles your faithful shepherdess. She sighs for you; and for you dies. But you come and suddenly, brightness and happiness is again hers. The miracle of love brightens the sky.

GENTLEMEN and ABBOTS

(With great admiration)

Ah, you are the miracle! Ah, you are the love!

GERONTE

(Sweetly interposing.)

Gallantry is well; but you forget that it is growing late. Happy crowds enliven the ramparts.

GENTLEMEN and ABBOTS

How time flies.

GERONTE

'Tis a thing that I know from experience. (*To Manon.*) You, my brilliant love, have promised to be our companion —we will precede you.

MANON

I only ask a few moments. Wait for me amongst the gilded throng.

GENTLEMEN and ABBOTS

Expectation is always grave.

GERONTE

Let this suspense not be long.

(All move—Salute—Hand-kissing.)

GERONTE

(Kissing Manon's hand.)

I shall order the sedan chair. Adieu, my idol. (*Exit.*)

MANON ALONE; THEN DES GRIEUX

(Manon hastily arranges her toilet, and admires herself satisfactorily in the looking-glass.)

MANON

Oh! I shall be the most beautiful. (*She takes her mantle from a chair—she hears someone approaching—thinking it is a servant.*) What? the sedan chair? (*Des Grieux appears at the door; he is very pale. Manon runs to him agitated.*) You, my love? You? Is it you, my only love? Heavens.

DES GRIEUX

(Reproachfully.)

Ah, Manon!

MANON

Do you not love me? Do you not love me any more? You loved me so much. Oh, the burning kisses! the great bliss! the sweet friend of yore awaits your vengeance. Oh, do not look at me so. Your glance formerly was not so severe.

DES GRIEUX

(Violently.)

Yes, wretch, my vengeance—

MANON

Ah, 'twas my fault. 'tis true. I have betrayed you. Yes, call me wretch. When misery overtook us I fled so as to leave you free to tempt fortune.

DES GRIEUX

Silence—you break my heart. You do not know of the dark, miserable days which overwhelmed me.

MANON

I want your pardon. See, I am rich. Does not this seem to you a palace, a feast of gold and colors? All is for you. I thought of a bright future; love guided you here. (*Kneeling.*) See I am at your feet, asking your pardon. Do not deny me. Am I, perhaps, less pleasing and beautiful than the Manon of yore?

DES GRIEUX

(Desolate.)

Oh! temptress! Is this the old, cursed, enchanted charm that blinds me?

MANON

'Tis the charm of love. Yield, I am yours.

DES GRIEUX

No longer can I struggle. You have conquered. I love you.

MANON

(Enchanted, rises and embraces Des Grieux.)

Come. Enfold within your arms Manon who loves you. Close to your bosom I cling. You only I love.

DES GRIEUX

In the depth of your eyes I read my destiny. All the treasures of the world flit about your divine lips.

MANON

Return; ah, return to our bower of love, to the lingering kisses of love.

DES GRIEUX

Manon, Manon! You again intoxicate my soul. These are again your kisses, this is again your love!

(Manon abandons herself to the embraces of Des Grieux who gently seats her on the sofa.)

MANON

Your kisses burn, sweet treasure; live, and be enshrined in my heart.

DES GRIEUX

In your dear arms is enchantment and oblivion.

MANON

My lips are the altar where your kiss is a god. (*With immense tenderness murmuring*) Adorable, dear lips.

DES GRIEUX

Manon, I die.

MANON

Sweet lips to kiss.

DES GRIEUX

Sweet suffering.

GERONTE, MANON and DES GRIEUX

(Geronte suddenly appears at the door in the rear, he stops stupified; Manon and Des Grieux rise quickly—Des Grieux makes a step toward Geronte—Manon interposes.)

GERONTE

(Advancing, ironically but dignified.)

Indeed, Mademoiselle, now I understand why you desired us to wait. I arrive at the wrong moment. An involuntary mistake. But who does not make mistakes? Even you, I think, forget that you are in my house.

DES GRIEUX

Sir!

MANON

(To Des Grieux.)

Silence.

GERONTE

Gratitude, to-day is your feast day! (*To Manon.*) Where did I get you? How you remember the proofs of true love I have given you!

MANON

(Takes a mirror, puts it before the face of Geronte while with the other hand she points at Des Grieux, repressing her laughter.)

Love? Love? My good sir, there. See for yourself. If I were mistaken, say so frankly. Now then look at us.

GERONTE

(Offended, makes a threatening sign; then restraining himself, moaning)

I will be frank, my little beauty. I know my duty. I must leave. Oh, gentle knight, oh, charming lady—Au revoir—and soon. (*Exit.*)

MANON

(Gaily thoughtless.)

Ah, free; free as the air. What joy, my knight, my beautiful love!

DES GRIEUX

(Sadly preoccupied.)

Listen, let us depart. This roof of the cursed old man shall not shelter you an instant longer.

MANON

(Almost unwillingly.)

What a shame. All this splendor. All these treasures. (*Sighing.*) Alas! We must depart.

DES GRIEUX

(With immense grief.)

Ah, Manon, your flighty thoughts betray you—still the same. Fearful of losing affluence, yet devoured by love. Good, gentle as the enchantment of your caress—always possessed of new charms—then, at once, conquered, blinded by the rays and by the glitter of the syren's life! (*with increasing force*) I, your slave and your victim descends the stairs of infamy. Scum of the scum I am and a dissolute hero of gambling, I stain myself, sell myself. The vilest shame draws me to you. (*Discouraged.*) In the dark future what will you make of me?

(He seats himself disheartened; Manon approaches lovingly and takes his hand.)

MANON

Once more, once more. Pardon me. I will be faithful and true, I swear it—I swear it!

LESCAUT, MANON, DES GRIEUX, then a SERGEANT WITH SOLDIERS, afterwards GERONTE.

(Lescaut enters excited-breathing with difficulty. Des Grieux and Manon, surprised approach him.)

DES GRIEUX

Lescaut!

MANON

You?—Here?

(Lescaut sinks into a chair, puffing heavily.)

DES GRIEUX

What has happened?

MANON

Speak!

(Lescaut's appearance indicates that something very serious has happened.)

DES GRIEUX and MANON

(Dismayed.)

Heavens! What has happened?

LESCAUT

(Stammering.)

Let me get my breath so that I can speak.

MANON

You agitate us.

DES GRIEUX

Ah, me! What has happened?

LESCAUT

He has denounced you.

MANON

Who?

DES GRIEUX

(Hastily.)

The old man?

LESCAUT

(Regaining his breath)

Yes! Already the soldiers and guards are coming. Up, sir; fly quickly down the stairs. I heard it all from a grenadier who was in the barracks.

DES GRIEUX

Ah! the sly old fox.

LESCAUT

Manon.

MANON

(Frightened.)

Ah, me!

LESCAUT

Quick—Speed to your feet! (*To Des Grieux*) Ah, you do not know—you will lose her. She, the unfortunate, will have a pitiless and cruel fate. The exile.

MANON

(Terrified.)

Ah! 'Tis death.

(Lescaut continues to hurry them, always talking, while Des Grieux, enraged, curses; and Manon, confused and disturbed, agitatedly wanders about the stage.)

LESCAUT

Now, be quick!
Don't hesitate!
A few minutes
And you are lost!
Already from the barracks
Come the soldiers.
The company
Is on the way.
Ah, the old villain
Will die of rage,
If he will find
An empty cage;
Not knowing
The place
Where she has flown.

(Hastening.)

Manon! Away!
They are on the way!

(Observing.)

Oh, the beautiful strong box!
'Tis really a pity.

DES GRIEUX

(Furiously.)

Ah, the cursed old man!

MANON

I hasten!

DES GRIEUX

Manon!

MANON

Alas!

DES GRIEUX

Yes! Beware, old man!

MANON

One moment! (*Showing Des Grieux a jewel on the toilet table.*) This brilliant Emerald—

DES GRIEUX

Let us go!

MANON

But, yes!

DES GRIEUX

Let us hasten!

MANON

Heavens—yes!

DES GRIEUX

Away!

MANON

I hurry! And you help me.

DES GRIEUX

To do what?

MANON

To gather these objects. You empty the caskets.

LESCAUT

(Hurried.)

Our path shall be through the garden. In a few moments, in the shadow of the high plants, we will be on the way. A smart fellow he who can catch us (*He throws her the mantle.*) Put on your mantle, Manon. (*Runs to a window.*) Malediction!

MANON

(With grief.)

And this palatial haunt, which I adore so much, I must leave and abandon? A w a y—patience! It would be imprudence to to leave this gold. Oh, my treasure!

(Opens anxiously several drawers, gets out some jewels, hiding them in her mantle.)

DES GRIEUX

(Lovingly.)

Oh, my beloved, Manon, be quick! We must leave now! Fly. Ah! still you torture me. You must take with you only your heart. I want to save only your love.

(The exclamation of Lescaut is followed by general confusion. Manon, embarrassed, turns here and there always hiding the jewels under the mantle. Lescaut runs from the window to the door. Des Grieux runs around the room calling Manon.)

LESCAUT

(At the window.)

There they are. Surrounding the house. The old man gives orders, screaming. The guards are filing off; the soldiers place themselves in position.

(At the door.)

They enter. They mount the stairs.

(Frightened, he locks the door and runs towards Manon and Des Grieux.)

DES GRIEUX

Manon!

MANON

Des Grieux!

DES GRIEUX

Let us fly!

MANON

From here?

DES GRIEUX

No!

MANON

Well?

DES GRIEUX

(Showing the alcove.)

From there.

MANON

Quick!

DES GRIEUX

(To Manon.)

Say! Is the exit here?

MANON

(Pointing.)

Yes, down there. To the alcove.

LESCAUT and DES GRIEUX

Quick, to the alcove!

(Lescaut pushes Des Grieux and Manon into the alcove, and follows them; but immediately a cry from Manon is heard from the alcove, and she returns to the scene quickly, followed by Des Grieux and Lescaut. Des Grieux wants to approach Manon; Lescaut keeps him back, and from the curtain of the alcove appear a Sergeant and two soldiers. Meanwhile the door is forced open by the butts of the soldiers guns, and through it enters, followed by soldiers, Geronte, grinning furiously.)

SERGEANT

(Haughtily.)

No one must move!

(Manon, from fright drops her mantle and the jewels are scattered all over the floor. At a sign from Geronte, the Sergeant and two soldiers seize Manon; Des Grieux, enraged, draws his sword, but is disarmed by Lescaut.)

LESCAUT

If they arrest you, Cavalier, who could save Manon?

(Manon is dragged away.)

DES GRIEUX

(Desperately, wants to rush after Manon; but Lescaut keeps him back forcibly.)

Oh, Manon! Oh, my Manon!

INTERMEZZO

The imprisonment—The voyage to Havre.

DES GRIEUX

("... The fact remains that I love her! My passion is so strong that I fancy myself the most unfortunate creature living. What did I not attempt in Paris to obtain her liberty? ! ... I have implored the powerful! ... I have knocked and supplicated at every door! ... I even took recourse to violence! ... All was useless—only one way remains for me; follow her. And I will follow her, wherever she may go. ... Even to the end of the world! ... ")—*History of Manon Lescaut and of the Chevalier Des Grieux, by Abbot Prevost.*

ACT III.

—

AT HAVRE.

Square near the harbor.

In the rear the harbor. To the left the corner of the barracks. On the side of the ground floor a window with a heavy iron grating. In front towards the square a closed gate, before which a sentinel is walking. The background of this scene consists of the sea. The half of a man-of-war is in sight. To the right a house, then a narrow street; at its corner an oil lamp giving a dim light. It is the last hour of night. Gradually the sky becomes lighter.

DES GRIEUX, LESCAUT, ASIDE, OPPOSITE THE BARRACKS.

DES GRIEUX

Eternal anguish—cruel.

LESCAUT

Patience. The guard there shortly will be the soldier whom I bribed. (*Pointing towards the sentinel.*)

DES GRIEUX

Waiting afflicts me. (*Impetuous and with deep sorrow.*) My life—my whole soul is there. (*Pointing to the window of the barracks.*)

LESCAUT

Manon knows already—and awaits my signal, and will come to us. Meanwhile I will try my scheme with my friends in the Avenue. At dawn I shall liberate Manon. (*He wraps himself completely in his cloak and goes cautiously toward the rear to observe.*)

DES GRIEUX

Following destiny I passed from one place to another, day and night I travelled. A mirage fills me with anguish and enervates me! Now she is near me—then when I seem to clasp her she flies. Paris and Havre—dull, sad, agony. Oh! long torture of my life!

—

MANON—DES GRIEUX—LESCAUT

LESCAUT

(Approaching.)

There they are.

DES GRIEUX

At last!

(From the barracks come a squad of soldiers, led by a sergeant, to relieve the sentinel.)

LESCAUT

(Who has observed the soldiers attentively.)

There is our man. 'Tis that one. (*Indicating one; the squad and sergeant reenter the barracks; Lescaut, joyously slapping Des Grieux's shoulder.*) Havre is asleep. The hour has arrived.

(He approaches the barracks, exchanges a quick sign with the soldier on guard, who withdraws; then, approaching the window on the ground floor, he knocks cautiously on the iron grating. Des Grieux watches intently and trembling; the window is opened and Manon appears. Des Grieux runs towards her.)

DES GRIEUX

(With suffocating voice.)

Manon!

(His hands grasp the iron grating.)

MANON

(Softly, with great abandonment.)

Des Grieux!

(Manon puts her hands through the grating; Des Grieux kisses them fervently.)

LESCAUT

(Observing Manon.)

Manon, my treasure—my help—let her go? To the devil with America! No, the new world shall not have Manon.

(Exits to the right.)

—

MANON—DES GRIEUX—A LAMPLIGHTER

MANON

You—love? And in this extreme disgrace you do not abandon me?

DES GRIEUX

Abandon you? Never! If I have followed you thus far it was because indomitable faith reigns in my heart! Ah, soon you will be free and mine!

MANON

(Sadly.)

Free! Yours—shortly!

DES GRIEUX

(Interrupting her, frightened.)

Silence! Silence!

(A lamplighter enters from the rear on the right, humming; he crosses the scene and goes to extinguish the light.)

THE LAMPLIGHTER

Kate thus answered the king: Why tempt a maiden's heart? God made me beautiful for a husband. The king smiled. Then he gave her gems and gold and a husband—and captured her heart.

(He goes toward the street; day begins to dawn; at the rear of the stage passes a patrol which crosses from left to right and disappears in the street.)

DES GRIEUX

'Tis dawn! Oh, my Manon. Be ready at the gate of the courtyard. Lescaut will be there with trusted men. Go there and you will be saved.

MANON

I tremble for you. I tremble.—I fear. I tremble and feel uneasy—yet know not why. Ah! a terrible dread I feel. I tremble for a danger which seems hidden from me.

DES GRIEUX

Ah! Manon, I beseech you despairingly. Anguish chokes my words. Do you want me to kill myself here? I entreat you, Manon. Come! come! Let us be saved. (*He points towards the lane.*)

MANON

So be it then. Wait for me, love. All you ask. All. (*She retires from the window.*)

(Gun shot, and from within cries of "To Arms!" Des Grieux rushes towards the street.)

LESCAUT—DES GRIEUX

LESCAUT

(Enters quickly with drawn sword.)

The game is lost! Cavalier, let us save our lives.

DES GRIEUX

What has happened?

LESCAUT

Listen how they scream. (*Fresh cries of "To Arms!"*) The attempt has failed.

DES GRIEUX

(Furiously)

Ah! Then welcome death. Fly? Never! (*Drawing his sword.*)

LESCAUT

(Preventing him.)

Ah! Fool, indeed.

MANON

(Re appears at the window agitated; with great feeling to Des Grieux.)

If you love me, in the name of God fly, my love.

DES GRIEUX

Ah! Manon—

LESCAUT

(Dragging Des Grieux away, muttering distrustfully, shaking his head.)

Sad affair!

(Manon disappears. Attracted by the shot and the cries of alarm, citizens and peasants run on the scene from every part, they ask one another what has happened. General confusion. It is daylight.)

CITIZENS, MEN and WOMEN. Then the SERGEANT of the GUARD, the COMMANDER of the MARINES. Later DES GRIEUX and LESCAUT, SOLDIERS, MARINES, SAILORS.

Did you hear? What has happened? Was it an abduction? A revolt?

A woman escaped. More than one! The thick darkness protected the abductors! What boldness! What rashness! See! Already the guards are coming.

(*Roll of drums; the gate of the barracks opens, the sergeant comes out with a squad of soldiers; in their midst several women in chains. The soldiers and the women stop in front of the gate; the sergeant advances towards the mob, ordering them to retreat.*)

SERGEANT

Open the way!

(From the ship descends the Commander, followed by a troop of Marines, who place themselves on the right. The sailors are formed in line on board of the ship.)

COMMANDER

(To Sergeant.)

The ship is ready. Call the roll quickly.

PEASANTS, MEN and WOMEN

Silence! The roll call begins.

(The crowd stands aside, gazing at the female prisoners. The Sergeant with a sheet of paper in his hand calls the roll. The women as soon as called pass with different gestures from left to right near the troop of Marines. The Commander takes notes in a book.)

SERGEANT

Rosetta! (*Passes impudently.*)
Madelon! (*Indifferently, goes to her place laughing.*)
Manon! (*Slowly, with eyes cast down.*)
Vinetta! (*Angrily, looking at the crowd.*)
Caton! (*With an imposing air.*)
Regina! (*Proudly.*)
Claretta! (*Goes to her place quickly*)
Violetta! (*Crosses in a pert way.*)
Nerina! (*Haughtily.*)
Elisa! (*Goes quietly.*)
Ninon! (*Covers her face with her hands.*)
Giorgetta! (*Coquettishly.*)

(Some Citizens grouped at the left in the foreground. Lescaut, pointing out Manon, speaks to them in a low voice.)

CITIZENS

She is beautiful indeed!

LESCAUT

That one? There is a mystery.

CITIZENS

(To Lescaut.)

Seduced? Betrayed?

LESCAUT

She has been abducted when a young girl by her love for a gallant young man.

CITIZENS

What infamy! What horror!

OTHERS

Ah! She excites pity.

LESCAUT

Abducted at the nuptials, forced to orgies and shameful caresses!

CITIZENS

(Indignant.)

Ah! 'Tis always thus.

LESCAUT

(Trying to excite the listeners.)

For one day's pleasure of an old man —then, satiated, turned out!

THE CROWD

YOUNG MEN

(Murmuring.)

Ah! What airs.

OTHERS

She is a love.

SOME PEASANTS

(With spite.)

Ah, to what are you reduced.

SOME WOMEN

(Indignant.)

What an insolent laugh.

SOME OLD MEN

Who knows? A seduction?

WOMEN

The Madonna is sorrowing.

YOUNG MEN

Ah—what sorrow.

OTHERS

What a gait.

OTHERS

She is a goddess.

OTHERS

Ah, I would.

OTHERS

What a blonde.

OTHERS

What a brunette.

OTHERS

(Insulting.)

What splendid beauty spots.

OTHERS

None are charming.

OTHERS

What a gay gathering.

MANON and DES GRIEUX

(Des Grieux in the rear, in the crowd. As soon as Manon has passed he cautiously approaches her, trying to hide himself behind her. Manon perceiving him with difficulty suppresses a cry of recognition. They grasp and press each others hands.)

CITIZENS

What infamy! What horror!

LESCAUT

(Pointing to Des Grieux.)

You see that pale one who is near her? 'Tis her miserable bridegroom.

CITIZENS

Ah! Really he is to be pitied.

LESCAUT

Thus, chained, disgraced and debased, he finds his abducted bride again.

(Cries with indignation.)

MANON

(With passion and anguish.)

Des Grieux, shortly I shall be gone—this is my destiny. Forever I shall have lost you. Fading happiness—farewell! Return home. Some day you may love again. Return to your father, forget Manon. Perhaps you were not loved enough--this is my remorse. But you forgive? (*A desperate sob interrupts her words.*) My hopeless, boundless love—farewell!

DES GRIEUX

Look at me and see what bitter anguish I am suffering, what torture a kiss from thy dear mouth is to me. Every thought produces tears! Oh, what anguish! Ah! My soul is consumed with hatred for men and God!

SERGEANT

(Placing himself in front of the prisoners.)

Quick—Fall in! (*The prisoners fall into line.*) Forward! (*Seeing Manon standing near Des Grieux.*) He here yet? I will put an end to that. (*Seizes Manon brutally by the arm and pushes her towards the others.*)

DES GRIEUX

(Who cannot restrain himself, tears Manon from the grasp of the Sergeant screaming.)

Back!

SERGEANT

(To Des Grieux.)

Away!

CITIZENS

(Incited by Lescaut, to Des Grieux.)

Courage!

DES GRIEUX

(Furiously, threatening.)

Woe to him who touches her! (*Draws Manon to him, shielding her with his person.*) Manon, cling to me!

CITIZENS

(Incited by Lescaut, run to assist Des Grieux, and prevent the Sergeant from approaching Manon.)

That is right! Bravo!

COMMANDER

(Appears suddenly in the midst of the crowd.)

What is the matter? (*The crowd retires respectfully.*)

DES GRIEUX

(Desperately, looking around threatening.)

Ah, do not approach! As long as I live nobody shall tear her from me! (*Perceiving the Commander, overpowered by profound emotion, bursts into a heartrending sob; his arms, which were embracing Manon, drop and he falls at the feet of the Commander imploring sorrowfully.*) No! I am mad. See how I weep and implore, how I crave pity! Hear me! Accept me as a cabin boy or even for the most menial work—and I shall become happy. Take my blood—my life! I will not prove ungrateful!

(Meanwhile the Sergeant sends the prisoners towards the ship, pushing Manon along with them. She goes slowly, covering her face with her hands, sobbing desperately. The crowd, pushed aside by the soldiers, looks on silently and with profound sympathy.)

COMMANDER

(Moved, bends over Des Grieux with a benignant smile and tells him in the surly manner of a sailor.)

Ah! Young man, you wish to go to America? (*Des Grieux looks at him with terrible anguish.*) Well, so be it. (*Tapping him on the shoulder.*) Forward, cabin boy—quick!

(Des Grieux utters a cry of joy and kisses the hand of the Commander. Manon turns her head, sees and understands—Her face becomes radiant with supreme joy; from the gangway she extends her arms towards Des Grieux, who rushes to her. Lescaut, aside, is looking, shakes his head and leaves.)

ACT IV.

IN AMERICA.

An extensive plateau on the border of the territory of New Orleans. A desolate and undulated land; vast horizon; cloudy sky. It is evening.

MANON AND DES GRIEUX ADVANCE SLOWLY FROM THE REAR; THEY ARE POORLY CLAD; THEY HAVE A BROKEN-DOWN APPEARANCE; MANON, PALE, EMACIATED, IS LEANING ON DES GRIEUX, WHO SUSTAINS HER WITH EFFORT.

DES GRIEUX

(Advancing.)

Lean on me, my dear fatigued darling. The dusty, accursed road. We are nearing the end.

MANON

(With feeble and oppressed voice.)

Ever forward and onward. Darkness soon will overtake us. The breezes sweep the great plain Day is dying. Forward. forward. (*Exhausted.*) No—(*she suddenly falls.*)

DES GRIEUX

(With a cry of anguish.)

Manon!

MANON

(With a still weaker voice.)

I am exhausted—I am overcome. Forgive me. You are strong—I envy you; woman and weak, I surrender.

DES GRIEUX

(Anxiously.)

You suffer?

MANON

(Quickly.)

Horribly. (*Des Grieux, touched by these words, shows by his looks and actions deep sorrow. Manon, forcing herself, continues*) No! What did I say? A useless, foolish word. Console yourself. I only need a brief repose—one instant. My beloved, approach. (*Faints.*)

DES GRIEUX

(With intense emotion.)

Manon—listen, my love—you do not answer, love. See, it is I who is weeping; it is I who is imploring—I who is caressing and kissing your golden tresses! (*As he continues his emotion becomes more intense.*) Answer me! Look at me! (*Pause*) She remains silent. Malediction! (*Touching her forehead.*) The cruel fever is gaining on her. To be thus baffled in this disastrous situation.

MANON

(Awaking suddenly, looks at Des Grieux hardly recognizing him; Des Grieux, bending, raises her from the ground.)

Is it you who weeps? You who implores? I hear your sobs, and your fervent tears bathe my face. Thirst devours me. Ah love, help; help.

DES GRIEUX

Oh, love. All my blood for your life. (*He runs to the rear, scrutinizes the distant horizon, then returns dubiously.*) Nothing, nothing, but barren land—not a drop of water. Oh, pitiless heaven. Oh God, to whom as child I prayed so often, help, help!

MANON

Yes—help. You can save me! Listen; here I will remain while you scrutinize the mysterious horizon, and search for a hill or a hut; go forward, and may you soon return with joyful tidings.

(Des Grieux, while Manon speaks, is overcome by great anguish; varying and strong sentiments struggle within him; he slowly seats her on a mound; remains yet irresolute how to act; then he slowly goes; when he reaches the rear he again becomes doubtful and gazes at Manon with despair, then, suddenly deciding, leaves quickly.)

MANON

(Alone; the horizon darkens; Manon breathes with difficulty; she falls over frightened, despondent.)

Alone—lost—forsaken. Alone. All then is finished! And in the dark desert I fall, I, the deserted woman! Land of peace this seemed to me. Ah my terrible fatality, what new wrath art thou kindling? . . . . They wanted to wrest me from him; and now my horrible past re-

vives and lives before me. It is stained with blood. Forced to flee again, as we were surrounded with bitterness and fear, I invoked the tomb as a dwelling of peace. No—I do not want to die—love —help!

(Des Grieux enters hastily. Manon falls into his arms.)

MANON

(Roused)

In your arms—love! the last time. (*Smiles and simulates hope.*) Do you bring joyful news?

DES GRIEUX

(Very sad.)

Nothing I found—the horizon revealed nothing—in vain I gazed far away.

MANON

I die—darkness descends—night descends upon me.

DES GRIEUX

A fatal delirium persecutes and overpowers you. Rest here on my heart. Rouse yourself.

MANON

(With infinite passion.)

Oh! that I who love you so much must die. Already speech fails me—but I can say that I love you. Oh! Love! Happy delirium!

(Falls slowly, while Des Grieux still tries to sustain her with his arms.)

DES GRIEUX

(Touches her face, then to himself, terrified.)

Chill of death! Heavens! the last hope is shattered.

MANON

(With a voice still more feeble.)

You cry, my sweet love. This is no time for tears; this is the time for kisses; time flies. Kiss me.

DES GRIEUX

And I still live. (*Cursing.*) Infamy!

MANON

My last desire is that death shall be for me a feast of divine caresses, awakening many new charms.

DES GRIEUX

Oh, the burdensome delight of the flame of eternal love!

MANON

The flame is nearly extinguished. Speak, oh speak! Alas, I hear you no more. Here, here, beside me I want your face—so—so—kiss me—I feel you yet!

DES GRIEUX

Without you I am lost—I will follow you.

MANON

(With last effort, solemnly commanding.)

I do not wish it! Farewell—dark is the night—I feel cold—was your Manon affectionate? Do you remember? Tell me of my joyous youth? The sun I shall see no more—

DES GRIEUX

My God!

MANON

My faults—calmly fade into oblivion. But my love—will never die.

(She dies)

(Des Grieux frenzied with pain, bursts into a convulsive cry, then falls insensible upon the body of Manon.)

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